The Translation of Code-Switching in African Literature: Comparing the Two German Translations of Ngugi Wa Thiongo's "Petals of Blood"

Authors : Omotayo Olalere

Abstract : The relevance of code-switching for intercultural communication through literary translation cannot be overemphasized. The translation of code-switching and its implications for translations studies have been studied in the context of African literature. In these cases, code-switching was examined in the more general terms of its usage in source text and not particularly in Ngugi's novels and its translations. In addition, the functions of translation and code-switching in the lyrics of some popular African songs have been studied, but this study is related more with oral performance than with written literature. As such, little has been done on the German translation of code-switching in African works. This study intends to fill this lacuna by examining the concept of code-switching in the German translations in Ngugi's Petals of Blood. The aim is to highlight the significance of code-switching as a phenomenon in this African (Ngugi's) novel written in English and to also focus on its representation in the two German translations. The target texts to be used are Verbrannte Blueten and Land der flammenden Blueten. "Abrogration" as a concept will play an important role in the analysis of the data. Findings will show that the ideology of a translator plays a huge role in representing the concept of "abrogration" in the translation of code-switching in the selected source text. The study will contribute to knowledge in translation studies by bringing to limelight the need to foreground aspects of language contact in translation theory and practice, particularly in the African context. Relevant translation theories adopted for the study include Bandia's (2008) postcolonial theory of translation and Snell-Hornby"s (1988) cultural translation theory.

Keywords : code switching, german translation, ngugi wa thiong'o, petals of blood
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